DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 543 PS 030 963

TITLE	Child Poverty in Rhode Island: Rhode Island Kids Count Issue Brief.
INSTITUTION	Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Providence.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ.; David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA.; Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City, MO.; Rhode Island Foundation, Providence.
PUB DATE	2002-09-00
NOTE	14p.; Also funded by CVS/pharmacy.
AVAILABLE FROM	Rhode Island Kids Count, One Union Station, Providence, RI 02903. Tel: 401-351-9400; Fax: 401-351-1758; e-mail: rikids@rikidscount.org; Web site: http://www.rikidscount.org.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; *Children; Demography; Employed Parents; Employment; Family Structure; *Low Income Groups; Minority Groups; Neighborhoods; Parent Education; *Poverty; Racial Differences; Tables (Data); Urban Areas; *Welfare Reform; *Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	Ethnic Differences; *Rhode Island; Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

Noting that Rhode Island has seen a significant increase in child poverty over the last decade in the context of a national decline, this Kids Count issue brief presents an in-depth examination of the economic well-being of children in the state. The brief notes that the highest rates of Rhode Island childhood poverty are among families with young children, single-parent families, minority families, and families living in the core cities and core urban neighborhoods. Tables delineate child poverty rates for 1990 and 2000 as well as the percentage of children in poverty who are minority children, for 39 cities and towns, for 6 core cities, for the remainder of the state, and the state as a whole. The brief discusses the impact of the following strategies to meet the needs of children in poverty: (1) targeting high-poverty neighborhoods to improve conditions, link families to economic opportunities, and provide support to children and families; (2) investing in family economic success through welfare reform efforts; (3) improving parental education and employment; and (4) educating poor children to prepare them for employment in a high-skills economy. The brief concludes with a discussion of achievements, challenges, and policy implications in the areas of health care; child care; the Family Independence Program; housing; jobs and income; adult education, literacy, and English as a Second Language; and education. A list of organizational resources completes the brief. (Contains 19 references.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 472 543

Child Poverty in Rhode Island: Rhode Island Kids Count Issue Brief.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Providence

September 2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth Burke Bryant

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

2

PS 030963

PS 030963

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Issue Brief

SEPTEMBER 2002

CHILD POVERTY IN RHODE ISLAND

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely than other children to have poor health, experience delays in learning and development, become teen parents, and earn less as adults.[1,2,3] Reducing child poverty requires that government and community leaders develop strategies to improve the financial security of low-income families. In addition, policies that address education, health, and developmental needs of children and support families have been shown to improve outcomes for children living in poverty.

The child poverty rate in Rhode Island increased between 1990 and 2000 while the national rate declined. In 2000, 16.5% of all children in Rhode Island were living in poverty (40,117 children) compared with 13.5% in 1990. This represents an increase of more than 10,000 poor children over the past decade. While Rhode Island's child poverty rate is nearly the same as the national average, Rhode Island has the highest child poverty rate among New England states.[4]

Child Poverty Rates in New England States (2000)

NH	7.3%
CT	10.0%
VT	10.7%
MA	11.6%
ME	13.0%
RI	16.5%
US	*16.1%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Addressing child poverty in Rhode Island requires a multi-faceted approach that builds on existing family supports while recognizing new demographic and economic challenges.

- Rhode Island continues to lead the nation in providing low-income families with access to affordable child care and health insurance. High-quality child care and health care are known to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on children.
- A changing economy and the increasing diversity of Rhode Island require increased investments that attract high-wage jobs, provide higher wages for low-skilled workers, improve the education levels of the workforce, and provide access to job training, literacy programs, and English language acquisition.

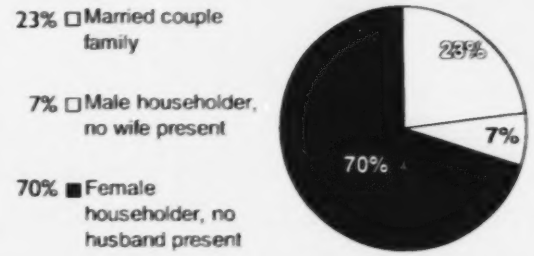
RHODE ISLAND'S POOR CHILDREN, 2000

The highest rates of childhood poverty in Rhode Island are among families with young children, single-parent families, minority families, and families living in the core cities and core urban neighborhoods. According to Census 2000, there are 40,117 poor children in Rhode Island, 16.5% of all Rhode Island children. In 2002, the federal poverty level for a family of four is $18,100.

By Age

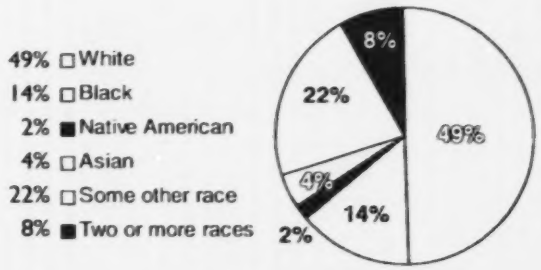
- While 14% of all Rhode Island families with children are poor, 19% of families with children under age 5 are poor.
- Of all poor children in Rhode Island, 35% are age 5 and younger, 37% are ages 6 to 11, and 28% are ages 12 to 17.

By Family Structure



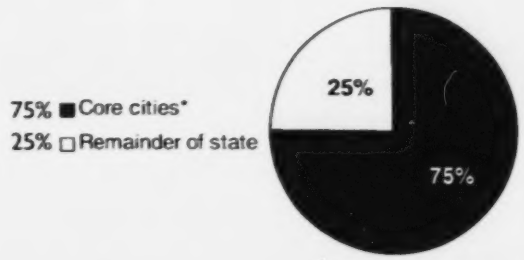
n = 40,117

By Race



Note: Hispanic or Latino children can be included in any race category. Of the 40,117 poor children, 15,750 (39%) are of Hispanic origin.

By Residence



n = 40,117

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

*Rhode Island KIDS COUNT defines core cities as those communities in which 15% or more of the children live in families with income below the federal poverty level. Because of increases in child poverty between 1990 and 2000, West Warwick is now a core city – with a child poverty rate of 18%. The other five core cities and their corresponding child poverty rates in 2000 are Providence (40%), Pawtucket (25%), Woonsocket (31%), Newport (24%) and Central Falls (41%).[5]

THE URBAN CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY IN RHODE ISLAND

- Three-quarters (75%) of Rhode Island's poor children live in one of the six core cities.[6]
- According to Census 2000, Rhode Island's poorest communities actually lost income over the past decade. Between 1989 and 1999, the median household income decreased by anywhere from 4% to 8% in each of the six core cities (with the exception of Newport which increased by 2% and now has a median income of $40,669).
- Rhode Island's more affluent communities gained income over the past decade, with increases ranging from 3% to 29% in median household incomes.[7] Between 1989 and 1999, Rhode Island was the state with the 9th largest increase in the income gap between the richest 20% of families and the poorest 20% of families.[8]
- Income inequality has been increasing nationally during the past two decades, due primarily to a growth in wage inequality, declining union membership, economic globalization, declining manufacturing jobs replaced by lower-paid service sector work, and the erosion of the minimum wage through inflation.[9]
- The high cost of housing exacerbates the isolation of low-income families in core urban neighborhoods.[10]

Six Highest Income Communities
1999 Median Household Income

Barrington	**$74,591**
East Greenwich	**$70,062**
West Greenwich	**$65,725**
Exeter	**$64,452**
Jamestown	**$63,073**
Scituate	**$60,788**

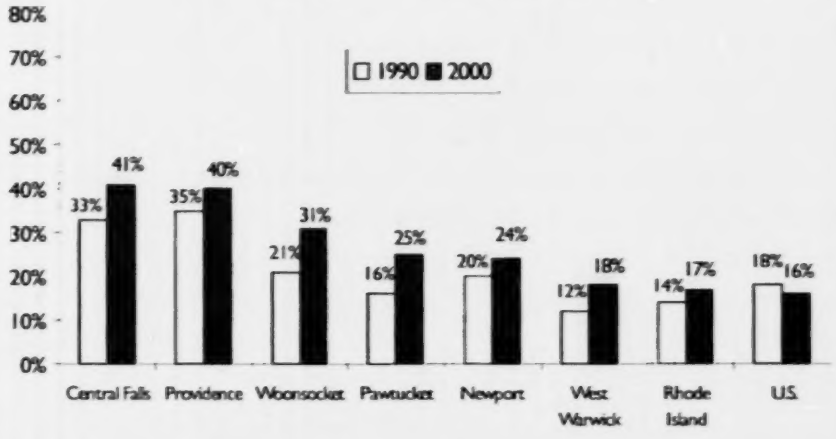
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Six Lowest Income Communities
1999 Median Household Income

Central Falls	**$22,628**
Providence	**$26,867**
Woonsocket	**$30,819**
Pawtucket	**$31,775**
East Providence	**$39,108**
West Warwick	**$39,505**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Child Poverty Rates, 1990 and 2000
Core Cities, Rhode Island, and U.S.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census.

The child poverty rate increased in each of the core cities between 1990 and 2000.

Providence now has the third highest child poverty rate (40%) in the country among cities with 100,000 or more in population.[11]

For the core cities as a group, the child poverty rate increased from 26% to 33% during the 1990s even as it remained relatively stable at just over 6% in the remainder of the state.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MINORITY CHILDREN

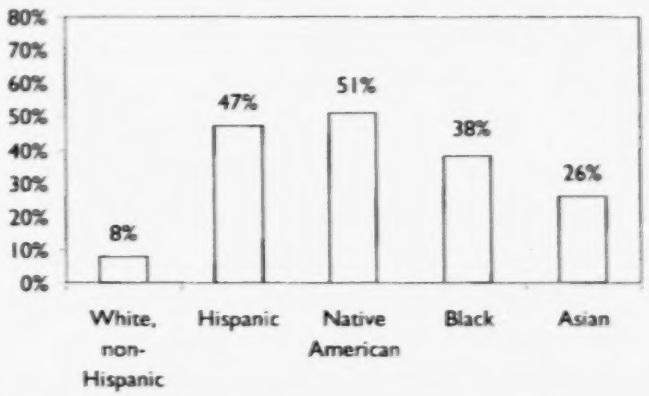
The percentage of minority children in Rhode Island increased from 16% to 27% between 1990 and 2000, with a particularly large increase in the number of Hispanic children. Minority children in Rhode Island are far more likely to be poor than White, non-Hispanic children. The poverty rates for Hispanic and Asian children in Rhode Island significantly exceed the national child poverty rates for these ethnic groups.[12] ***Sixty-four percent of Rhode Island's poor children are from minority racial and ethnic groups.***

Rhode Island's total child population grew by 10% between 1990 and 2000 (22,132 additional children) while the White, non-Hispanic child population of the state declined by 5% (nearly 9,000 children).[13]

The growing diversity of Rhode Island's children is not evenly distributed. Increasingly, minority children are concentrated in core urban communities which also have increasingly high rates of child poverty.[14]

76% of children in Providence and 72% in Central Falls are members of minority groups. In several neighborhoods of Providence, minority children now comprise over 90% of all children.[15,16] These neighborhoods have some of the highest child poverty rates in the state.

Children in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2000



One in ten White, non-Hispanic children in Rhode Island are poor. One in two Hispanic children, one in two Native American children, one in three Black children and one in four Asian children in Rhode Island are poor.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

LATINOS IN RHODE ISLAND: A PROFILE

In the last decade, the increase in the Latino population of Rhode Island accounted for all of the state's population increase.

More than half (57%) of the Latinos in Rhode Island were born in Puerto Rico or are immigrants born in another country. Almost one third (30%) arrived in Rhode Island since 1990.

More than three-quarters of Rhode Island's Latinos live in Providence, Pawtucket or Central Falls. In Providence, Latinos make up 30% of the population (and have quintupled since 1980); in Central Falls, Latinos make up 48% of the population.

Latinos account for 9% of the population of Rhode Island and 14% of the child population. More than half (56%) of all children in Central Falls and 45% of children in Providence are Latino.

More than one-third (39%) of all Rhode Island children living in poverty are Latino. **One in two Latino children in Rhode Island is poor, compared with less than one in three nationally.**

Sources: Uriarte, M. et al. (2002). *Rhode Island Latinos*. Boston, MA: Mauricio Gaston Institute, University of Massachusetts, Boston, and U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

CHILDREN IN POVERTY, 1990 AND 2000

MINORITY CHILDREN IN POVERTY, 2000

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING IN POVERTY IN RI				TOTAL CHILDREN IN POVERTY	MINORITY CHILDREN IN POVERTY	% OF ALL CHILDREN IN POVERTY WHO ARE MINORITY CHILDREN
	1990		2000				
	N	%	N	%	N	N	%
Barrington	52	1.3%	116	2.5%	116	0	0%
Bristol	253	5.9%	396	9.2%	396	53	13%
Burrillville	276	6.1%	236	6.0%	236	18	8%
Central Falls	1,576	32.5%	2,189	40.8%	2,189	1,663	76%
Charlestown	145	9.4%	78	4.7%	78	0	0%
Coventry	402	5.3%	455	5.6%	455	10	2%
Cranston	1,378	9.5%	1,417	8.6%	1,417	384	27%
Cumberland	302	4.7%	237	3.1%	237	65	27%
East Greenwich	153	5.3%	147	4.1%	147	19	13%
East Providence	904	8.7%	1,109	10.7%	1,109	407	38%
Exeter	52	3.6%	112	7.5%	112	0	0%
Foster	88	7.6%	32	2.9%	32	0	0%
Glocester	156	6.5%	171	6.4%	171	0	0%
Hopkinton	75	4.1%	107	5.5%	107	9	8%
Jamestown	92	8.1%	17	1.4%	17	0	0%
Johnston	452	8.4%	527	9.0%	527	58	11%
Lincoln	272	7.0%	316	6.2%	316	129	41%
Little Compton	20	2.7%	8	1.0%	8	0	0%
Middletown	275	6.0%	264	6.2%	264	110	42%
Narragansett	122	4.5%	230	8.4%	230	43	19%
New Shoreham	17	10.1%	19	10.2%	19	5	26%
Newport	1,143	20.3%	1,223	23.8%	1,223	757	62%
North Kingstown	281	4.7%	657	9.6%	657	116	18%
North Providence	298	5.4%	559	9.8%	559	164	29%
North Smithfield	37	1.6%	67	2.8%	67	0	0%
Pawtucket	2,525	15.5%	4,353	24.5%	4,353	2,958	68%
Portsmouth	182	4.4%	118	2.8%	118	39	33%
Providence	12,946	34.5%	17,714	40.1%	17,714	15,747	89%
Richmond	30	2.0%	82	4.2%	82	4	5%
Scituate	91	3.7%	113	4.3%	113	0	0%
Smithfield	155	4.1%	153	3.9%	153	0	0%
South Kingstown	350	7.5%	297	4.9%	297	103	35%
Tiverton	200	6.4%	90	2.7%	90	0	0%
Warren	199	8.5%	198	8.1%	198	11	6%
Warwick	1,084	5.9%	1,175	6.4%	1,175	177	15%
West Greenwich	26	2.9%	40	2.7%	40	0	0%
West Warwick	746	11.8%	1,170	17.9%	1,170	264	23%
Westerly	432	8.7%	512	9.6%	512	101	20%
Woonsocket	2,235	21.4%	3,413	31.3%	3,413	2,098	62%
Core Cities*	21,171	25.7%	30,062	33.4%	30,062	23,487	78%
Remainder of State	8,851	6.2%	10,055	6.6%	10,055	2,025	20%
Rhode Island	***30,022***	***13.5%***	***40,117***	***16.5%***	***40,117***	***25,512***	***64%***

*Core cities are Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket; Newport, Central Falls, and West Warwick.

**Note: Racial/ethnic census data depend on self-identified minority status and include all children except those identified as White, non-Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

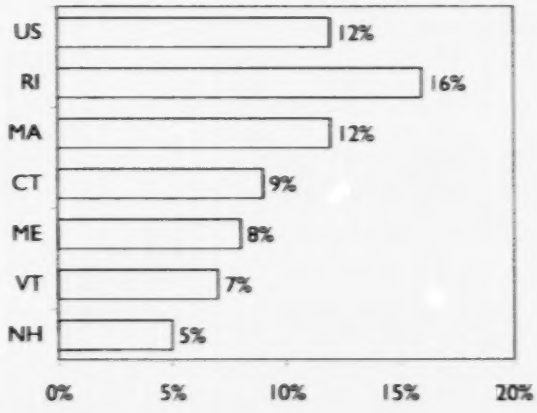
TARGETING HIGH-POVERTY NEIGHBORHOODS

Strategies that focus on neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty and children with multiple risk factors are critical. Efforts that improve neighborhood conditions, link families to economic opportunities, and provide supportive services to children and families can improve child outcomes, even for the poorest children.[17]

Children living in Rhode Island's core cities are more likely to live in single-parent families, have parents who have dropped out of high school, and live in families in which no parent has full-time, year-round employment.[18]

Children whose families face multiple disadvantages are at the greatest risk. The effect of each risk factor is not merely additive: each additional risk factor compounds the likelihood of poor outcomes.[19]

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AT HIGH-RISK: U.S., RHODE ISLAND AND NEW ENGLAND



16% of Rhode Island children are at high-risk due to multiple risk factors. This is the highest rate in New England and higher than the national rate of 12%.

Note: According to this study by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a child is at high-risk if they have at least three of the following: child lives in a family with income below the poverty line; child lives in a single-parent family; child lives in a family where no parent has full-time, year-round employment; and child lives with a head of household who is a high school drop out.

Source: *Children at Risk: State Trends 1990-2000* (2001). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS

Making Connections, a national initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, seeks to stimulate and support local movements to transform high-risk neighborhoods into environments that support families. *Making Connections Providence* works to engage residents, civic groups, political leaders, grassroots activists, faith-based organizations, and public and private sector leaders to make long-term changes that improve the quality of life for children and families in South Providence, Elmwood, and the West End.

The premise of Making Connections is that children do well when families do well. Children succeed and families are strong when they live in neighborhoods that connect them to:

Economic opportunities including jobs with adequate wages, affordable child care and health care, and opportunities to build savings and assets.

Social networks including supportive relationships with kin, neighbors, faith communities, and civic groups. These networks provide resources and reduce stress and isolation.

Supportive services such as high-quality child care, high-performing schools and adult education, safe and affordable housing, recreation programs and libraries, and access to prevention and crisis-response services.

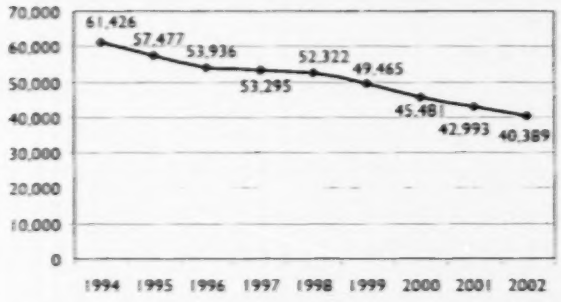
Source: Making Connections, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002. www.aecf.org/initiatives/ntfd/index.htm.

INVESTING IN FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Rhode Island's approach to welfare reform has been to invest in low-wage workers through cash assistance, education and training, and access to child care and health care, with the long-term goal of improved economic security for families.[20]

Rhode Island's welfare caseload decline has been slower than in other states. However, the caseload declines have continued steadily even as many other states have begun to see caseload increases.[21]

Adults and Children Enrolled in AFDC/Family Independence Program (FIP), 1994 to 2002



Note: Prior to May 1, 1997, the Family Independence Program was AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). Two-thirds of FIP recipients are children under age 18.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, INRHODES Database, 1994 to 2002.

New research suggests that long-term investments in education, training, child care and health insurance are paying off:

- Rhode Island's job retention rate for welfare recipients is significantly above the national rate. For FY 2000, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services won a USDHHS high performance bonus of $4.8 million for having a top 10 ranking in improvement in job entry and success in the workforce.[22,23,24]
- Almost half (46%) of Rhode Island FIP recipients who leave the program have income above the poverty level (as compared with 39% in a national sample) and more of them are employed.[25]
- The hourly wages of former FIP recipients compare favorably to those of welfare leavers nationally and wages are higher for those who have completed education and training than for those who have not.[26]

TWO MEASURES OF FAMILY FINANCES: THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL AND THE RHODE ISLAND STANDARD OF NEED

The *Federal Poverty Level* (FPL) is an underestimate of the number of families with children in Rhode Island who are unable to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and other necessities. The FPL does not take into consideration the costs of work expenses such as child care and transportation, nor does it consider rising housing costs. On the other hand, the FPL also fails to consider the cash value of child care subsidies and health insurance. **Rhode Island's policy of providing health care and child care to low-income working families helps to stretch family income and improve child outcomes.**

The *Rhode Island Standard of Need*, a measure calculated annually by the Poverty Institute at the RI College School of Social Work, considers multiple factors, including the costs of housing, child care and health care as well as the cash value of tax credits and income support programs (e.g., Food Stamps, child care subsidies, RIte Care). **A single parent with two young children who earns $10.55 an hour (150% FPL or $14,630/year) is able to make ends meet,* primarily due to child care and health care subsidies. If the family earns more than 225% FPL ($32,918/year), they become ineligible for the child care subsidy and expenses begin to exceed income.**

Source: The Poverty Institute at Rhode Island College School of Social Work (May 2002). *The 2001 Rhode Island Standard of Need.* Providence, RI: Rhode Island College School of Social Work. *All data as of 2001.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

IMPROVING PARENTAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Reducing child poverty increasingly depends on improving the educational attainment of parents. Economic globalization, the decline of well-paid manufacturing jobs and the increase in low-paid service sector employment contribute to an erosion of wages for workers without a college education.[27] The three fastest growing jobs in Rhode Island (retail salespersons, cashiers, nursing aides/orderlies) pay an annual wage close to or below the federal poverty level for a family of four.[28]

In the core cities, 14% of adults over age 25 have less than a ninth grade education. This increases to one in four (24%) adults in Central Falls.

Increased education results in increased income across all racial/ethnic groups. In the United States, the median income of individuals with a bachelor's degree is nearly three times the median income of a worker without a high school education.[29]

Increasing the availability of quality adult education, literacy and English language programs in Rhode Island would enable many low-wage workers to advance to more-skilled employment at higher wages.

Adult basic education improves literacy for adults without a high school diploma, for immigrants who have limited English skills and for high school graduates who lack skills needed for the new economy.

High-quality adult education and improved access to higher education can reduce poverty rates by developing skills and competencies leading to higher-wage employment.

Six Core Cities
Adults with less than Ninth Grade Education, 2000

Central Falls	**24%**
Newport	**5%**
Pawtucket	**13%**
Providence	**15%**
West Warwick	**8%**
Woonsocket	**14%**

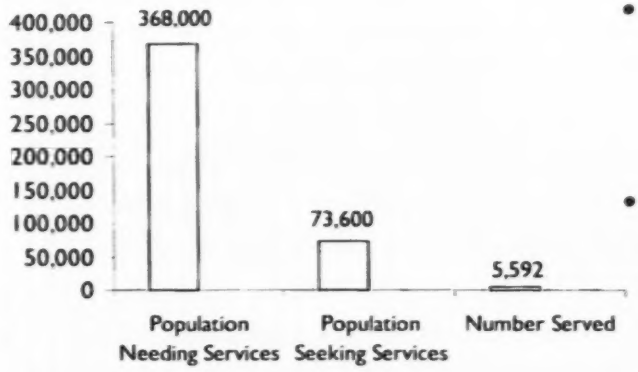
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Adult is defined as an individual 25 years of age or older.

Six Highest Income Communities
Adults with less than Ninth Grade Education, 2000

Barrington	**2%**
East Greenwich	**1%**
West Greenwich	**2%**
Exeter	**5%**
Jamestown	**3%**
Scituate	**4%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Adult is defined as an individual 25 years of age or older.

Demand for Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language Services, Rhode Island, 2001



- Among New England states, Rhode Island has the highest percentage of residents below basic literacy standards. There are an estimated 368,000 people who need adult literacy and ESL services in the state.
- The estimated demand for adult literacy and ESL services in Rhode Island is 73,600 people. The adult basic education system is only able to meet 8% of demand (5,592 clients).

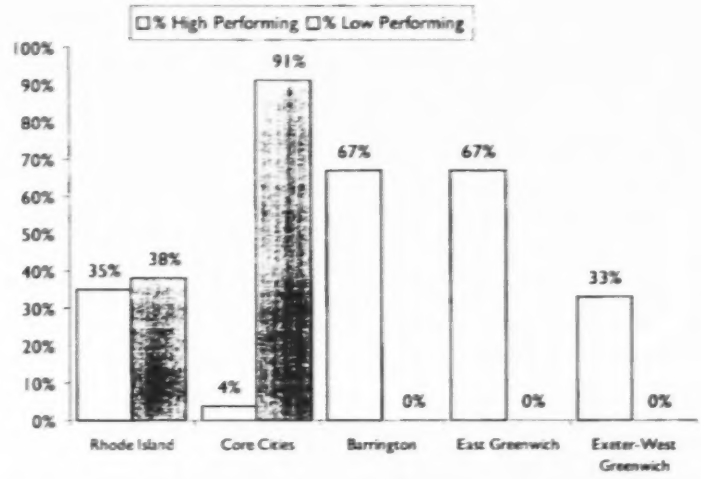
Source: Liebowitz, M. et al. (April 2002). *Rising to the Literacy Challenge: Building Adult Education Systems in New England.* Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future and the Nellie Mae Foundation.

EDUCATING POOR CHILDREN: THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORKERS

Given the link between educational attainment and family economic status, schools have a critical role in preparing children and youth for employment in a high-skills economy. In Rhode Island, the low performance of schools and high dropout rates in the communities where poverty is highest threatens to perpetuate poverty for the next generation.

An additional challenge for low-income communities is the 56% increase between 1990 and 2000 in the number of children receiving English as a Second Language services or Bilingual Education services. *The number of children receiving these services increased from 6,494 students in 1990-1991 to 10,154 students in 2000-2001. The core cities account for 91% of this increase.*[30]

High Performing Schools: Rhode Island, Core Cities and Highest Income Communities, 2001



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2000-2001 school year.

Only 4% of schools in the core cities were high performing and 91% were low performing. However, almost half (41%) of core city schools demonstrated improvement between the 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 school years.

Note: High performing schools are those in which at least 50% of students achieved the state's math and reading standards; low performing schools are those in which 33% or more of students performed significantly below standards or did not score.

Core Cities
High School Drop-Out Rates, 2000-2001

Central Falls	**33%**
Newport	**23%**
Pawtucket	**37%**
Providence	**36%**
West Warwick	**28%**
Woonsocket	**22%**

Highest Income Communities
High School Drop-Out Rates, 2000-2001

Barrington	**9%**
East Greenwich	**10%**
Exeter-West Greenwich	**3%**
Scituate	**7%**
North Kingstown	**12%**

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2000-2001 school year.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The increased diversity and higher poverty rates among children in Rhode Island require policy approaches that build on the state's achievements and make the well-being of children and their families a priority. Comprehensive strategies are needed to address the needs of a changing and growing population and a high-skills economy. Specifically:

HEALTH CARE

Maintain Rhode Island's accomplishment of being best in the nation in providing health care coverage to children.

Retain current RIte Care eligibility standards for children, parents, and pregnant women.

Monitor and reassess premium increases in light of evidence that many families cannot afford the premiums and are losing RIte Care coverage as a result.

CHILD CARE

Continue the state's commitment to child care by maintaining the guarantee of child care assistance to all eligible families (up to 225% of poverty). Affordable, quality child care makes work possible for low-income families and provides children with developmental opportunities that enhance school readiness and mitigate the effects of poverty.

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Maintain and increase Rhode Island's commitment to family economic security through education, training, and family supports for FIP recipients. Emerging evidence indicates that this approach improves employment rates, job retention, and income and therefore holds out the promise of reduced child poverty rates.

Develop additional comprehensive supports for families with multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. There is evidence in Rhode Island and nationally that families still receiving cash assistance generally have more serious barriers to employment than those who have left assistance.[31, 32]

HOUSING

Maintain and expand on Rhode Island's initial investment of $10 million for affordable housing.

Increase funding of the Neighborhood Opportunity Program in order to develop additional affordable housing.

Increase the availability of low-income and affordable housing in every Rhode Island community.

JOBS AND INCOME

Ensure that reducing child poverty, which increasingly occurs despite family work participation, is a public policy priority.

Invest in economic development efforts that retain middle-income jobs and increase the availability of high-wage jobs.

Increase wages for workers at the low-end of the labor market so that they have earnings that meet family needs (e.g., increased minimum wage, living wage requirements).

Change tax policies to increase the real earnings of low-income families, including making the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable in Rhode Island.

Ensure that eligible families enroll in income support programs such as Food Stamps, child care subsidies and RIte Care.

ADULT EDUCATION, LITERACY AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Ensure adequate access to high quality adult education, adult literacy, and English as a Second Language programs through increased state investments that improve the capacity and quality of the system.

Integrate literacy and ESL training with job skills training to promote entry into the workforce as well as advancement and wage improvement.

EDUCATION

Improve educational opportunities for poor children, thereby improving their future job opportunities.

Invest in schools and youth programming in low-income neighborhoods to ensure rapid improvements in school performance and improved high school graduation rates in these areas.

Improve access to full-day kindergarten programs for all children and families.

Encourage the development of small schools for low-income and minority children in urban areas.

Invest in comprehensive early education programs for young children and families, including Early Head Start and Comprehensive Child Care Networks.

FOCUS ON THE CORE CITIES

Rhode Island has many children and families that would benefit from sustained investments in comprehensive family support programs that address the multiple needs of all family members, especially in the lowest-income neighborhoods of the core cities.

SELECTED RESOURCES:

COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT AND NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED PROGRAMS

Central Falls Family Support Center
South Providence Family Support Center
Children's Friend and Service
Lenette Azzi-Lessing, Executive Director
401-331-2900

John Hope Settlement House
Family Renewal Center
Richmond Flowers, Clinical Supervisor
401-455-2330

Making Connections Providence
Shannah Kurland, Site Coordinator
401-781-3669, ext. 255

Connecting for Children and Families, Woonsocket
Terese Curtin, Executive Director
401-766-3384

Sullivan School Family Center, Newport
Christine Arouth, Director
401-845-8579

Cunningham/Slater COZ Family Center, Pawtucket
Mary Parella, Coordinator
401-729-6293

RESOURCES

The Poverty Institute,
Rhode Island College
School of Social Work
Nancy Gewirtz, Ph.D., Director
401-456-8239
Linda Katz, Policy Director
401-456-4634

Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Poverty, George Wiley Center
William Flynn, Coordinator
401-728-5555

Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy (CHisPA)
Luisa Murillo, Executive Director
401-467-0111

Progreso Latino
Edwin Cancel, Executive Director
401-728-5920

Urban League of Rhode Island
Dennis Langley, Executive Director
401-351-5000

Rhode Island Community Action Association (RICAA)
Edward L. Canner, Executive Director
401-467-9610, ext. 162

Rhode Island Community Food Bank
Bernie Beaudreau, Executive Director
401-826-3073

Dorcas Place Parent Literacy Center
Brenda Dann-Messier, Executive Director
401-273-8866

The Housing Network
Brenda Clement, Executive Director
401-521-1461

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Health Care/Medicaid
John Young, Associate Director
401-462-3575
Child Care
Reeva Sullivan Murphy
Child Care Administrator
401-462-6875
Family Independence Program
Sherry Campanelli,
Associate Director
401-462-2423

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REFERENCES

[1,8,9,27]Bernstein, J. et al. (April 2002). *Pulling Apart: A State-By-State Analysis of Income Trends.* Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute.

[2]Children's Defense Fund (1994). *Wasting America's Future: The Children's Defense Fund Report on the Costs of Child Poverty in America.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

[3]*America's Children: Key Indicators of Well Being* (2002). Washington, DC: U.S. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.

[4,5,6,7,12,13,14,15,18]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000. Note: Number of children in poverty is based on Census data for "children related to head of household for whom poverty status was determined."

[10]*Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage–Rent Disparity* (2001). National Low Income Housing Coalition.

[11]*Big Cities with Highest and Lowest Child Poverty Rates, 1999* (2002). Children's Defense Fund.

[16]Census 2000 data as analyzed by The Providence Plan.

[17]Making Connections, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002.

[19]*Children at Risk: State Trends 1990-2000* (2001). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[20]Anton, T. et al. (2001) *Against the Tide: Welfare Reform in RI.* Providence, RI: Brown University, A. Alfred Taubman Center.

[21]*Caseloads Up in Most States Between September and December, 2001* (March 2002). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

[22,25,26]*Rhode Island Family Independence Program, Longitudinal Study, First Year Follow-Up Report* (2001). Providence, RI: Rhode Island College School of Social Work.

[23]Rhode Island Department of Human Services, 2002.

[24]*Factors Affecting Rhode Island's Welfare Caseload Reduction* (2001). Providence, RI: RIPEC and the Poverty Institute.

[28]Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, *Occupational Employment and Wages* (OES). 2001 Edition.

[29]*Income in 1999* (March 2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

[30]Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2000-2001 School Year.

[31]*Comments to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Regarding the Reauthorization of the TANF Block Grant* (November 2001). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

[32]A&M Consulting (February 2002). *Rhode Island's Family Independence Act: Research Demonstrates Wisdom of Putting Families First.* Cranston, RI: Rhode Island Department of Human Services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For assistance with this issue brief we thank: Bernie Beaudreau, RI Community Food Bank; William Flynn, George Wiley Center; Sherry Campanelli, Donalda Carlson, Tim Kemmy, RI Department of Human Services; Nancy Gewirtz and Linda Katz, the Poverty Institute, RI College School of Social Work; William O'Hare and Megan Reynolds, The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Martye Scobee, Urban Studies Institute, University of Louisville; Judy Jones, Maura O'Brien, RI Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation; Kip Bergstrom, Beth Collins, RI Economic Policy Council; Brenda Dann-Messier, Dorcas Place; Luisa Murillo, Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a children's policy organization that provides information on child well-being, stimulates dialogue on children's issues, and promotes accountability and action. Primary funding for Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is provided by The Rhode Island Foundation and The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Additional funding is provided by Prince Charitable Trusts, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, CVS/pharmacy, Ocean State Charities Trust, Hasbro Charitable Trust and other corporate, foundation and individual sponsors.

Rhode Island* KIDS COUNT *Staff

Elizabeth Burke Bryant,
Executive Director
Catherine Boisvert Walsh,
Deputy Director
Wilsa Galarza,
Administrative Assistant
Olinda Matos,
Communications Coordinator
Dorene Bloomer, Finance Director
Laura Beavers, Research Analyst
Veronika Kot, Policy Analyst
Sonia Rodrigues-Carr,
Pawtucket Covering Kids Coordinator
Theresa Hancock, Policy Associate
Royce Conner, Policy Associate
Raymonde Charles, Program Assistant

***Rhode Island* KIDS COUNT**

One Union Station
Providence, RI 02903
401-351-9400
401-351-1758 (fax)
email: rikids@rikidscount.org
www.rikidscount.org

Production of the Rhode Island Kids Count Issue Brief Series is made possible through the generous support of CVS/pharmacy.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

PS030963